



# ARA-8.13 - Micrographic and Digital Imaging Conversion Policies

Administrative Rules Adopted by City Council (ARC)

Policy category: [Archives & Records Management](#)

Policy number: ARA-8.13

Search Code, Charter,  
Policy

Keywords

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## Purpose

The purpose of these policies is to establish a consistent, responsible and cost-effective method for using current technologies to ensure the preservation of and access to authentic city records.

## Authority

The City of Portland Charter, [Section 2-504(a) 3] charges the City Auditor with responsibility for the *"Maintenance of all official records, including records of the various bureaus, records regarding the City Charter and City Code, and all other records regarding City business."*

City Code section 3.76.040 authorizes the Archives and Records Management Program to:

*Acquire, receive, appraise and secure records of permanent value from agencies of the City of Portland when those records are no longer necessary for conducting current business;*

And to:

*Establish standards for City agencies with regard to the appropriate use of record media, accounting for cost, access and preservation;*

## Background

All city agencies are responsible for maintaining their records, regardless of medium, in compliance with the city record retention schedule. Sometimes the medium in which the record is originally created is not suitable for meeting retention requirements. At other times, a bureau may want to change a record's medium for business purposes, such as providing greater access. In either case, guidelines established by Archives and Records Management must be followed. Following these guidelines will ensure that business needs, record access requirements and budgetary factors are addressed.

Factors that must be considered include:

- Are there legal requirements dictating the form in which the record is to be maintained?
- In what medium was the record originally created?
- How long must the record be retained?
- Is the original medium and system application capable of reproducing the record for its entire retention period?
- What is the cost of maintaining and providing access to the record in its original format for the duration of its retention period?
- Is the record maintained in a system that requires proprietary software to gain access?
- How frequently and for how long must the record be accessed or retrieved for normal business purposes?
- Does the proposed new format represent the original in quality?
- Can the proposed new format be reproduced in paper at a sufficient quality to be completely legible?
- How widely is the record requested – is it used by other agencies or the public?
- Does the record have historical significance?

## Policy

This policy is to be applied when:

1. Bureaus are maintaining the official record copy in an electronic format.
2. Bureaus are considering changing the format or medium of existing records (e.g. scanning or microfilming paper records; converting electronic records to microfilm)
3. Bureaus are creating or maintaining historically significant, permanent or vital records.

When a bureau is considering conversion from one medium to another (e.g. paper to digital) or is required by city policy to maintain records in a specific medium (e.g. microfilm), they must follow this policy, regardless of whether the work is to be performed in the bureau or by another service provider.

If converting records from one medium to another, bureaus must apply the following rules to ensure the proper preservation of and access to each

category of city records listed below:

Category 1: These records have a short retention period (9 years or less).

- Paper records: Records should not be microfilmed unless the volume of paper is unusually large. Records should only be digitized for a legitimate business reason or if frequent access by a broad range of users is required.
- Electronic records: Records should not be microfilmed. The records must reside in a recordkeeping system capable of maintaining the records for the entire retention period.

Category 2: These records have a medium retention period.

- Paper records (10-29 years): Records should only be digitized for a legitimate business reason or if frequent access by a broad range of users is required. Records should only be microfilmed for a legitimate business reason.
- Electronic records (10-74 years): Official City records with a retention period between 10 and 74 years should only be microfilmed for legitimate business reasons. These records must be retained in an electronic recordkeeping system that is DoD 5015.2 certified.

Category 3: These records have a long to permanent retention period.

- Paper records (30 years and longer): If the bureau wants to digitize the records, it must also create archival-quality microfilm at the same time.
- Electronic records (75 years and longer): Bureaus must maintain official copies of these records in an electronic recordkeeping system that is DoD 5015.2 certified and must also create archival-quality microfilm. A timeline for microfilming must be developed in conjunction with Archives and Records Management.

Category 4: Records of historical significance – Some records are historically significant regardless of their legal retention period and may have to undergo archival review. If the applicable retention schedule categorizes the records as potentially archival, the bureau must contact Archives & Records Management before destroying or converting to another medium. If a bureau believes specific records may have archival value, even if the retention schedule doesn't indicate, the bureau must contact Archives & Records Management.

## Process

Bureaus undertaking conversion projects should submit their requests to the City Printing and Distribution Division, which will coordinate with Archives/Records Management to ensure compliance with scanning and filming standards.

*See also:* [PPD ADM-8.14 Scanning Standards for Bureau Records](#)

## History

Ordinance No. 182637, passed by City Council April 1, 2009 and effective May 1, 2009.

Administratively renamed ARA-8.13 on December 6, 2022